



»» MOVING ON »»

Issue 18 February 2007

The newsletter for HGV and PSV operators

Switch off before you drive off!

Research shows that you are four times more likely to crash if you are using a mobile phone while driving. Your reaction times will also be slower than someone who has been drinking.

Penalties for ignoring the laws that govern the use of mobile phones while driving are getting tougher, and it's no wonder.

It is already illegal to use a hand-held mobile phone while driving but, from 27 February, drivers who are caught using one will receive a £60 fine and three penalty points on their licence. These penalties will also apply if you don't control your vehicle because you are distracted by a conversation on a hands-free mobile. If you are a commercial vehicle driver and caught using your phone while driving you will be reported to the Traffic Commissioners.

Using a mobile phone while driving includes:

- when you are stopped at traffic lights;
- when you are queuing in traffic; and
- if you receive or make calls, pictures, or text messages, or try to access the internet.

Employers can also face prosecution if they cause or permit employees to use hand-held phones which results in poor control while driving.

If you drive carelessly or dangerously when using a phone that is hand-held or hands-free, the penalties can include disqualification, a large fine and up to two years' imprisonment. It is far safer for you



and for others if you go to voicemail and access messages when safely parked and switch off before you drive off.

Exceptions

Exceptions apply for genuine 999 (or 112) emergency calls. Even under these circumstances, the exceptions only come into play if it is unsafe for the driver to stop. A driver can use a two-way radio – but not other devices for sending and receiving data if they are hand-held (for example a personal digital assistant).

Advice for safe driving

If you do need to remain in contact while you are on the move:

- use voicemail/message diversion while driving;
- only use your phone when parked in a safe place;

- remember that calls on hands-free phones are just as distracting; and if you phone someone who is driving tell them you will phone them later and then hang up.

You have a personal responsibility to know the law, so visit www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk or contact your local Road Safety Officer for more information.



VOSA

Vehicle & Operator Services Agency

From the editor



Welcome to the first *Moving On* of 2007

Brrr, hasn't the weather been cold and windy lately?

During these winter months spare a thought for your vehicles. The Freight Best Practice team has produced some simple but effective tips (page 8) that, if followed, can help save you money and improve safety on the roads.

If you need a bit of help getting your head around the guidelines about belting up in coaches, our quick guide should do the job – see page 4.

And, do you ever wonder what gets dropped on the motorway? You'll be surprised what the Highways Agency has found when trying to keep our roads free from debris. It certainly is an eye opener. See page 6 for more.

As always I hope you enjoy this issue. If you would like to read about something in particular, do get in touch.

Claire

Moving On, VOSA, Berkeley House, Croydon Street, Bristol BS5 0DA, or email movingon@vosa.gov.uk

News in brief

Revised *Safe operator's guide* published – the first of a new VOSA suite of guides

A new and revised edition of one of VOSA's most popular guides is now available.

The safe operator's guide, which will form part of a suite of VOSA publications, is dedicated to giving useful information to operators, drivers and other staff involved in the use of goods and passenger-carrying vehicles.

It has been produced for the Department for Transport (DfT) by VOSA in conjunction with the Confederation of Passenger Transport, the Freight Transport Association and the Road Haulage Association. Also, the Traffic Commissioners have given their full support to the publication.

You will have received a copy of the Guide with this edition of *Moving On*; if you require further copies then phone the VOSA national enquiry number on 0870 60 60 440 or download a copy from www.transportoffice.gov.uk

The revised Guide explains the procedures and systems required for the monitoring of drivers' hours, record keeping (including digital tachographs), speeding and speed limiters, driver licensing and training, and safe loading.

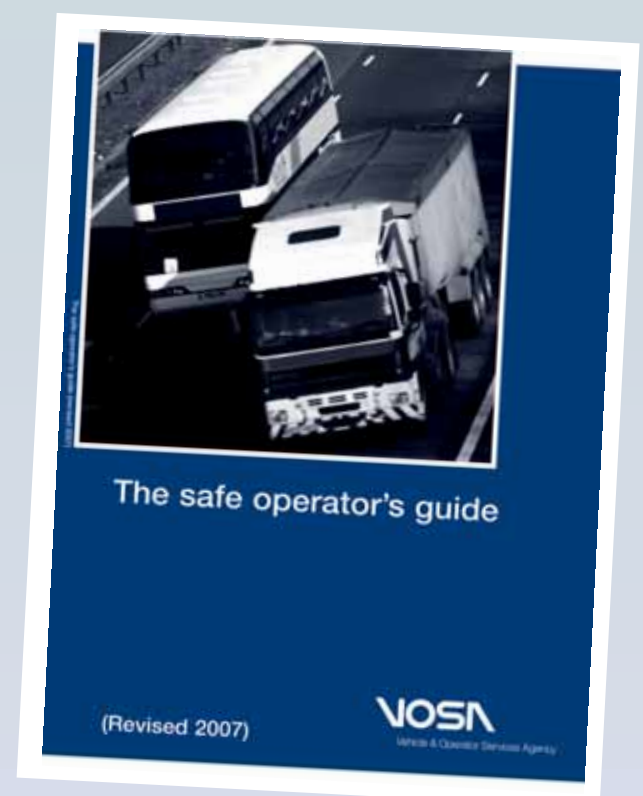
Also, it gives useful information on various aspects of a transport operation, such as driver sleepiness and driver recruitment, plus explaining some of VOSA's most recent initiatives such as targeting and graduated fixed penalties and the introduction of the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC).

Although it is only three years since the first edition of this Guide, there have been so many advances in technology in that short period that VOSA feel it's necessary to bring out this latest edition.

The *Guide to maintaining roadworthiness* has also recently seen some updates. The revised version will help to encourage operators to review whether or not they are really carrying out routine vehicle checks at the right frequency. For more modern vehicles – and for more lightly used vehicles – a somewhat less demanding approach may be possible without compromising vehicle roadworthiness and road safety.

New information is also included on saving fuel and protecting the environment. The Guide includes contact details for more information. The use of computer-based maintenance systems is also covered. Copies can be obtained from the same sources as *The safe operator's guide*.

A new look *Guide to maintaining roadworthiness* is already on the cards and will be published later in the year. This is to bring the style in line with the new *Safe operator's guide* by using the same design and use of language.



Electric dreams

Is the future electronically controlled? Mark Warden reports on the results of a project that has been investigating what the future holds for the industry.

When you turn on the ignition of your vehicle are you welcomed by the sight of lots of dashboard lights that suddenly go out after a few seconds? If you are, then welcome to the world of electronically controlled vehicles.

Over the years vehicle technology has advanced at a terrific pace and almost every system on your vehicle has an electronic control. Those of you who have ever triggered an anti-lock braking system will know exactly what I mean! The bank of lights you see on your dashboard before they suddenly disappear is the vehicle self-testing its electronics.

A new project examining electronically controlled safety (brakes, suspension airbags, etc) and emission systems on modern vehicles will help determine the future introduction of scan tool testing.

Project Idelsy (Initiative for Diagnosis of Electronic Systems), co-funded by the European Commission, is a joint project run by VOSA along with German and Spanish testing organisations.

During the course of the two-year project, the VOSA Research and Development team examined over 400 vehicles. They identified some initial problems with the location of diagnostic sockets (where a scan tool plugs into a vehicle).



This was a particular problem for right-hand drive vehicles and with various information storage locations within electronic control units – the brain box. This meant that a scan tool test initially took around 15 minutes to complete but was later reduced to around seven minutes.

In addition, it was soon discovered that general sale scan tools that are designed to test every make and model in Europe did not have all the vehicle details in their memory banks. However, Bosch, perhaps not surprisingly given their market share, had the best coverage of the general tools under trial.

Scan tools designed by individual vehicle manufacturers for their own vehicles do not hold details on other makes and models so they did not play a major part in our trials.

The use of the Bosch scan tool allowed us to test 80 per cent of vehicles under trial, which was quite encouraging. The 20 per cent we could not interrogate were due to incomplete or partially complete communication protocols. Not surprisingly, when the 20 per cent were tested using their own vehicle manufacturer's tool, the communication was fine.

The project found that there is still work to do before any general scan tool testing can be introduced into the MOT test, but



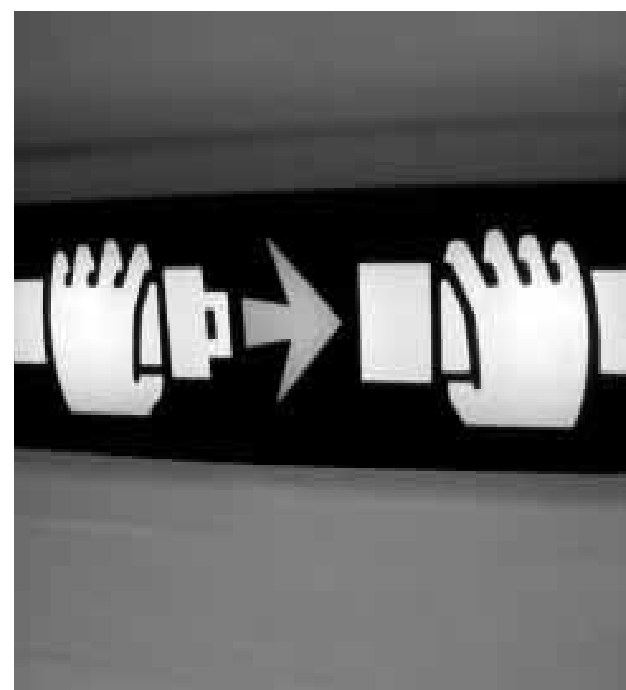
the project certainly showed what can be achieved over time. In the meantime, it's given us the opportunity to provide feedback, and work more closely with vehicle and equipment manufacturers. The ultimate aim is to have a general scan tool that can communicate quickly with every vehicle.

The project team's report has been submitted to the European Commission for their consideration. The information from this report has also been input into the European Study 'Autofore', which is looking at future recommendations for testing and enforcement in Europe.

Is the future electronic – the computer says YES!

Belt up

The new Wearing of Seat Belt Regulations 2006 bring European Union (EU) Directive 2003/20/EC into national law and will have a profound effect upon coach operators where seat belts are fitted.



The following is a quick guide to the requirements that became mandatory on 18 September 2006.

- Passengers must wear the safety belt if one is available. They will need to wear the belt while they are actually seated and the vehicle is in motion. The driver and crewmember must also wear a belt if their seat is equipped with one.
- Operators are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure that every passenger is notified that it is a legal requirement to wear an available seat belt. The operator may use any one or more options permitted by the directive to fulfil this legal obligation. These are:
 1. The driver, conductor, courier or group leader can make an announcement.
 2. Audio or video presentation can be used (e.g. tape or TV). The announcement or presentation must be made when the passenger boards the vehicle or within a reasonable (unspecified) time period of boarding.
 3. A sign can be prominently displayed at each passenger seat equipped with a belt. The sign must contain either text or the specified pictogram (white figure wearing a three-point belt against a blue background). The Department for Transport (DfT) has indicated flexibility regarding the provision of signs, and will accept one sign per double seat fitted to the window, luggage rack or woven into the seat

material. There will be a fine of up to £2,500 where an operator fails to provide the necessary notification.

- The regulations do not at this time require children less than 14 years of age to wear a belt in a bus or coach. The general rule is that it's the driver's duty to ensure that child passengers less than 14 years old wear seat belts.
- All passengers are exempt from wearing seat belts where a bus or coach is certified to carry standing passengers, or where it is used to operate a local service and the entire route is on 'restricted roads' in a built-up area. This exemption applies to both adults and children.

And there's more...

1. There is nothing in these 'wearing' regulations to change the existing requirements for fitting belts (e.g. to more seats, or out-of-scope vehicles and buses). Therefore the wearing requirement can only apply where belts are already fitted.
2. This information is specific to buses and coaches (i.e. any vehicle with more than eight passenger seats). For other vehicles that may be on your Operator Licence, check carefully with us at VOSA or DfT about your obligations.
3. The regulations do not ban the carriage of standing passengers as long as the bus or coach is officially approved to

carry standing passengers by its Certificate of Initial Fitness. This approval must be identified by the carrying capacity (the number that buses and coaches are legally required to display) displayed on the vehicle.

4. All passengers aged 14 and over are always legally responsible for putting on and wearing their own belts.
5. The same rules apply to all seats on the upper deck of a double deck bus or coach. The regulations clearly specify that any deck above the driver's head (when he is in the normal driving position) is part of the rear of the vehicle. (Rear is defined as any part of the vehicle to the rear of a transverse vertical plane through the rearmost part of the driver's seat.)
6. Some buses and coaches have passenger seats alongside the driver. These are deemed front seats. It is an offence to drive the vehicle unless children are properly restrained in the front of any vehicle. Children under three years old must be placed in an appropriate child seat or restraint. Children aged three or over must be belted in, but could use an adult belt if an appropriate restraint was not available. Alternatively, the children could move to a rear seat (see point 5 above).
7. The definition of a small bus has changed from an unladen weight of

2,540kg to a gross weight not exceeding 3.5 tonnes. This may slightly change the driver's responsibility to ensure that children wear their belts – although there may be further changes following a consultation about extending this requirement to larger vehicles.

8. The UK concession that young children up to five years old can sit on a parent's lap in a public service vehicle and not count as a passenger is still allowed. If the seat belt is worn in these circumstances, only the parent should wear the belt.
9. Where a minibus or coach is used wholly or mainly for the carriage of children (probably where the journey would not happen if the children were not present), each child aged three or over must have its own forward-facing seat fitted with a belt. This legal requirement overrides the general concession detailed above in 8.
10. The regulations apply equally to a crewmember – a hostess or guide would be under the same obligation to wear their belt. However, they only need to wear the belt while seated.
11. The requirement to wear belts and notify passengers is an EU-wide obligation. The authorities of other Member States will enforce similar requirements.
12. These regulations also introduce requirements regarding the use of child restraints, booster cushions and child seats in passenger cars, vans and other goods vehicles. These requirements do not apply to vehicles with more than eight passenger seats (i.e. minibuses, buses and coaches).

This guidance is reproduced by kind permission of the Confederation of Passenger Transport UK (CPT). For more information and advice, contact CPT through their website www.cpt-uk.org, or visit www.transportoffice.gov.uk



New regulations to kick in

This April will see new 'user-friendly' legislation replacing the old Drivers' Hours Rules. Graeme Baxter explains how this will improve your working day.

The existing Drivers' Hours Rules, under Regulation 3820/85, are to be replaced by Regulation 561/2006 on 11 April this year.

The new regulations are aimed at maintaining road safety, improving working conditions for vehicle crew and ensuring a competitive 'level playing field' throughout the road transport sector. They will also clarify and simplify the existing definitions, working limits and driving limits.

In addition, the new rules are more 'software friendly' and, coupled with the introduction of digital tachographs, will enable operators to more readily analyse records of driving and working time.

Basics remain the same

The basic limits to driving are unchanged; although it should be remembered that all driving, whether on road or what was previously seen as 'off road', now counts towards the limits.

The maximum continuous driving period is still four and a half hours, after which a 45-minute break must be taken. This break can be split, but the first period must be at least 15 minutes and the second at least 30 minutes. Breaks must also be distributed throughout the driving period.

Drivers of buses and coaches engaged on regular services to designated areas can no longer take a break of 30 minutes after four hours of driving. They must follow the rules regarding driving and breaks described above.

The daily driving limit is still nine hours, which may be extended, twice in a week (a week runs from 00:00 Monday to 24:00 Sunday), to no more than 10 hours. A new weekly limit of 56 hours has been introduced. The fortnightly limit of 90 hours' driving remains unchanged.

Daily rest periods

Daily rest remains unchanged at 11 hours within the 24-hour period from the end of the previous rest period. A driver may reduce their daily rest to no less than nine consecutive hours, up to three times between weekly rest periods.

No 'compensation' is required for this 'reduced rest'. If working a 'split shift', drivers must have one period of at least three hours of rest followed by

an additional nine-hour rest period within the 24-hour cycle.

Where a vehicle is double manned, the daily rest requirement is nine hours in 30. An additional point to note with crewed vehicles is that during the first hour, the presence of the second driver is optional, thereafter it is mandatory.

After no more than six 24-hour periods – following the end of the last weekly rest period – a new weekly rest period must be started. Normally this will be 45 hours. However, it may be reduced to no less than 24 hours. If a reduced rest is taken one week, the next weekly rest period must be a full 45 hours.

Additionally, any reduction in weekly rest must be compensated by taking an equivalent amount of rest 'en bloc' by the end of the third week following the week of reduction.

No more 12-day rule

A very important point for bus and coach operators is that the 12-day rule has been revoked; from 11 April, when the new regulations bed in, lorry, bus and coach drivers will follow the same driving rules.

For drivers travelling abroad, the ability to interrupt their daily rest to board a ferry or train continues. A regular daily rest may be interrupted up to two times for a total time period of one hour. A bunk or couchette must be available for use at all times.

Same as before

Rules governing Domestic Hours Journeys and those made under the AETR Convention remain unchanged, at present. Many exemptions and derogations from these regulations are broadly similar to those contained within Regulation 3820/85.

However, drivers of specialised breakdown vehicles need to remember that they are only exempt provided they remain within a 100km radius of base.

The derogation whereby vehicles with between 10 and 17 seats were exempt while on UK journeys has been rescinded, unless the vehicle is used exclusively for the non-commercial carriage of passengers.

For more information see the poster enclosed with this issue of *Moving On* or go to www.transportoffice.gov.uk

Keeping it clean

The Highways Agency's Lucy Rees explains the important role the Agency plays in helping keep our busiest roads free of dangerous debris.

What would you expect to find on a motorway?

Certainly road signs, crash barriers and emergency roadside telephones, but a pair of theatrical curtains, a garden rake and a sofa cushion?

Highways Agency Traffic Officers are called to the busiest motorways in England on a daily basis to remove objects that have ended up there. The objects have to be removed quickly to avoid accidents being caused by a vehicle striking an object or swerving to avoid one.

Dangerous goods

According to Highways Agency Operations Manager Malcolm Metcalfe, lorry straps are the most common find. These can get embedded in tyres and cause blowouts. More unusually, Traffic Officers have also had to deal with the front bucket from a digger, a car bonnet, the tail lift from the back of a lorry and a sliding van door. Drivers often don't even realise loads they are carrying have fallen from their vehicle. Traffic Officers have found a greenhouse, a garden shed, a deckchair and a box full of pound coins thought to come from a gambling machine.



So once these items have found their way onto the motorway, how are they removed, and where do they go?

Clearing up our roads

Traffic Officers may spot items during a routine patrol, or one of their colleagues in

the control room might see them on CCTV. Objects may also be reported by a member of the public using an emergency roadside telephone which dials directly into one of the Highways Agency's Regional Control Centres.

"A crew is dispatched to investigate the debris," explains Malcolm. "Sometimes they can remove it themselves and sometimes they need to put in place a rolling road closure."

"This means that one Traffic Officer crew will use their vehicle to gradually slow the traffic, while colleagues up ahead in another vehicle retrieve the item. The idea is to remove it quickly and safely without the need to bring traffic to a complete standstill."

Once a piece of debris is in a safe place, it is collected by a Highways Agency Incident Support Unit from a nearby depot and sent for safe disposal.

So what can be done about the problem? Malcolm says the advice is simple:

"Drivers should always check the condition of their vehicles and any loads attached before they set off. That will ensure they arrive with everything they set out with!"

The latest on Driver CPC

The new Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (Driver CPC) is coming.

Driver CPC is designed to improve road safety and enhance the professional image of the industries. It will be introduced for professional bus and coach drivers from September 2008 and for professional lorry drivers from September 2009.

New entrants into these professions at these dates will be able to acquire Driver CPC at the same time as their vocational licence. Existing drivers will not have to pass an initial qualification, but both groups will have to complete 35 hours of periodic training every five years to maintain their Driver CPC. Periodic training will ensure drivers have the specific skills and knowledge needed for their job.

All training centres and training courses delivering periodic training must be

approved and there will be a central record of these, allowing drivers and employers to find out what training is available. We are currently working on producing a *Guide to Periodic Training* which will explain the approval process for setting up courses. This will be published as soon as possible in early 2007.

Your opinion matters

Other developments include plans to undertake research through MORI to gain a fuller picture of the number of people affected by Driver CPC. This will include those with bus, coach or lorry licences, and those who are driving category C1 vehicles (between 3.5 and 7.5 tonnes) who passed a car test before 1997. This research will also explore awareness of Driver CPC and the

most effective ways for us to communicate with our target audiences.

In April 2007 there will be changes to the current bus, coach and lorry theory test. The number of multiple-choice questions will increase from 35 to 60. There will be a further increase in April 2008 which is designed to raise the standard of all new drivers of these vehicles – not only those who will be driving professionally.

For more information, please go to the Driving Standards Agency website at www.dsa.gov.uk/cpc

If you would like to put questions to the Implementation Team please email them at drivercpc@dsa.gsi.gov.uk or telephone 0115 901 5952.

Are you aimed correctly?

At this gloomy time of year, working headlamps are clearly very important. So we thought it would be a good time to bring you some top tips for preparing your vehicles before their tests.



Headlamp aim is still the most common failure item for buses, coaches and lorries. VOSA's last survey of 584 vehicles (mostly goods vehicles) found:

- a significant number of vehicles were failed due to the headlamps not being matched, i.e. one side was aimed either high or low, while the other was okay;
- of the vehicles failing the test, almost half would have passed if the headlamp causing the fail had been set to a position that matched the opposite side; and
- the failure rate could be reduced significantly through improved maintenance/preparation.

We've put together some good ideas to help your vehicles pass their test.

Top tips

- Is the headlamp free of condensation? If the beam pattern is blurred and the examiner cannot determine a distinctive cut-off point, this is a reason for failure. Try leaving the headlamps on for a short time to 'burn off' the condensation.
- Is the bulb fitted correctly? Make sure that the bulb is correctly aligned with the location lugs in the headlight unit.
- Is the headlamp and its internal reflector secure? Tap the headlight with your hand

and assess if the headlight unit or the internal reflector is insecure.

- Is the headlamp reflector corroded or deteriorated? Look through the headlight glass.
- Is the headlamp adjuster free? A check of the adjusters (and a drop of penetrating oil) while preparing the vehicle at test preparation can make all the difference.
- Is the vehicle fitted with headlamps that dip to the right? Headlamps that dip to the right are acceptable providing beam converters are fitted.
- Does the vehicle presenter know how to adjust the headlight? Do they know what to do and do they have the correct adjusting tool with them?
- Are the headlamp adjusters easily accessible? It may be easier to remove the headlight surround before presenting the vehicle for test. Be careful, however, that the removal of these surrounds doesn't leave sharp edges.
- Does the in-cab headlamp adjustment device work? This device may be used to enable the headlamp alignment criteria to be met. This said, both headlamps must comply with the device set in one position.
- Are the tyre pressures correct? A check of tyre pressure isn't part of the annual test, but the correct pressures may help when it comes to headlight aim.

Working together

VOSA has invested heavily in more robust modern equipment to help us all achieve a consistent test standard. In addition, we have joined forces with trade groups to contribute to a pilot study looking at the quality of headlight bulbs and the Vehicle Certification Agency has examined various bulbs based on the requirements to meet ECE Regulations.

Following these bulb tests the Department for Transport has commissioned a study to establish if the quality of replacement bulbs is a significant cause of headlamp mis-alignment.

Once we have further news about these activities, we will update you with further guidance on headlamp aim in a future issue of *Moving On*.

In the meantime, if you've not already seen a copy of our leaflet, visit www.vosa.gov.uk/vosacorp/repository/Headlight%20Aim.pdf

Battling the elements → Freight Best Practice

Winter is an unpredictable time of year and the sudden onset of severe weather can present a real risk to road users and have an impact on your efficiency too. The Highways Agency and DfT's Freight Best Practice have teamed up to provide helpful advice to truck operators. Their mantra is 'preparation is the best defence'.



Seasonal weather has a significant effect on fuel efficiency. Analysis of thousands of vehicles undertaken by the University of Huddersfield shows that during the winter months fuel consumption can be up to 4 per cent above its 12-month average. "This is mainly down to winter grade diesel, windier weather, a change in road conditions and greater use of heaters, lights and wipers, making good fuel management even more important," explains Peter Binham, spokesperson for the Freight Best Practice programme. "By following basic best practice advice, operators can save fuel and reduce accidents."

The Freight Best Practice team has produced some simple but effective tips that, if followed, can help save operators money and improve upon safety during the winter months.

Transport managers' top winter tips:

- Managers should regularly check the weather and traffic reports and communicate the expected conditions to their drivers.
- Make sure drivers have access to de-icer and good quality screen scrapers.
- Instruct drivers to keep their dashboard clear of obstructions so that the heater vents have the maximum effect.
- Keep all cab glass, lights, reflectors and number plates clean. This will reduce the risk of these items icing over through moisture retention.
- Windscreen washer bottles should be kept topped up with appropriate additive to prevent freezing.

- Nominate one person to apply de-icer to all trucks parked in the yard before the drivers arrive.
- Instruct drivers never to attempt to clear iced screens by using their wipers. If the wiper rubber is stuck to the screen due to ice, switching them on will cause damage to the wiper rubber, making them less effective.
- Ensure vehicles are topped up with fuel in case of delays by weather or accidents, and make sure drivers have access to fuel.
- If vehicles return to the depot at the end of shift with deposits of ice and snow built up around the chassis and wheels, this should be cleaned off as soon as possible. Such deposits, if left, can cause frost damage to the chassis components and could become detached while driving, causing hazards to other road users.
- Educate drivers to be more aware of increased stopping distances during icy conditions. Issue them with bad weather driving advice, such as that provided in the Freight Best Practice pocket guide *Safe Driving Tips* (see below).
- Issue drivers with warm, high-visibility jackets.
- Managers should ensure that they have access to winter grade fuel. Filling stations will have this automatically but if you keep bunkered stocks, make sure that all of the summer grade fuel is used and replaced with winter grade fuel before the onset of winter.
- If possible, park vehicles so that the cab and engine are sheltered from the wind.

Carry out parking the night before with a warm engine so that the vehicle can be driven straight out of the depot the next morning. Manoeuvring with a cold engine uses more fuel.

- In extreme cold weather avoid excessive use of vehicle washing facilities as the water applied will increase the risk of freezing.

The Freight Best Practice programme is grateful to the programme's Freight Ambassadors John Claffey, Operations Manager at A1 Paper plc, and Phil Clifford, Fleet and Technical Manager at St Edmundsbury Borough Council, for their help in compiling these tips.

The Freight Best Practice team has produced a FREE pocket guide – *Safe Driving Tips* – which gives advice on driving lorries in bad weather, together with best practice examples. For your copy, please call the Freight Best Practice Hotline on 0845 877 0 877 or visit www.freightbestpractice.org.uk

Government agency details

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)

Drivers' enquiries
0870 240 0009
drivers.dvla@gtnet.gov.uk

Vehicle enquiries
0870 240 0010
vehicles.dvla@gtnet.gov.uk
www.dvla.gov.uk

Driving Standards Agency (DSA)
0115 901 2500
www.dsa.gov.uk

Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA)
0117 951 5151
www.vca.gov.uk

Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA)
0870 60 60 440
www.vosa.gov.uk

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